

Infants, Young Children and Pandemic H1N1 Influenza

Highest Risk for Illness and Complications from Influenza

- Children under 5 years of age and those with high risk medical conditions are at increased risk of influenza-related complications.
- Children under 6 months of age are at a higher risk for complications.
- For seasonal influenza, the risk for severe complications is highest among children less than 2 years old.
- Other high risk groups include: children with immune suppression, chronic kidney disease, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, asthma or other lung problems, sickle cell disease, and those on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Children with any condition that affects respiratory function, including neurological conditions such as intellectual or developmental disability, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, metabolic conditions, or other neuromuscular disorder are at a higher risk.
- Children under 18 who are pregnant have a higher risk of complications from influenza.
- Children and infants with poor nutritional and fluid intake due to prolonged vomiting and diarrhea have an increased risk of complications from influenza.

Influenza Symptoms

- Illnesses caused by influenza virus are difficult to distinguish from other respiratory illnesses based on symptoms alone.
- Young children are less likely to have typical influenza symptoms (e.g. fever, cough). Infants may have fever and lethargy, but may not have cough or other respiratory signs and symptoms.

Treatment and Symptom Relief in Children and Infants

- Call your doctor if you suspect your child or infant has influenza.
- Antiviral medication, if taken soon after infection, can shorten illness.
- Do NOT give aspirin or aspirin-containing products to any child under the age of 18 due to the risk of Reye Syndrome.
- For relief of fever, use anti-fever medications such as acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.
- If your child is under 4 years of age, do NOT give over-the-counter cold medicines without first speaking with a healthcare provider.

If you need help finding a doctor for your infant or child, call the Indiana Family Helpline at: 1-800-433-0746

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